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RESEARCH REPORT

The Nagas

SOD/Joint Operations Intelligence Center

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THE NAGAS

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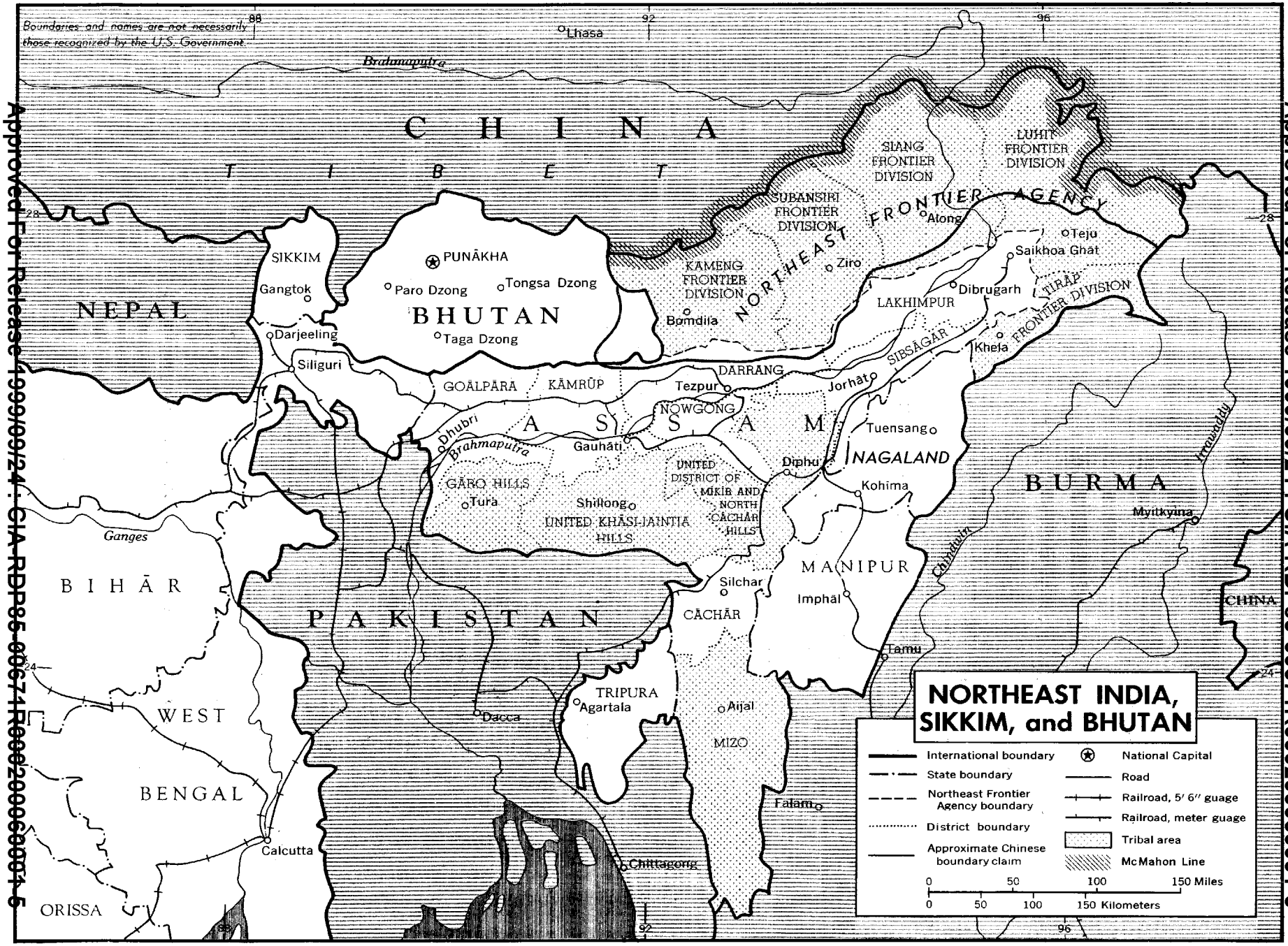

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1. BACKGROUND

Identification of the Naga

Naga is a generic term referring to a group of Tibeto-Burman-speaking Indo-Mongoloid tribes concentrated in the hill country dividing Assam from Burma. Population estimates for the dozen major Naga tribes in this region of northeastern India range between 350,000 and 500,000. An additional 80,000 to 100,000 related tribesmen inhabit the Naga Hill District of Burma. While the Naga tribes differ in racial composition, area of origin, language, technological advancement and degree of assimilation to Indian (or Burman) national culture, they have sufficient in common to distinguish them from such non-Naga neighbors as the Kachin, Kuki, and Kachari people. In August 1960 creation of Nagaland as a new (the 16th) state within the Indian Union was announced, culminating longstanding desires and struggles of the Naga tribes for some measure of autonomy.

Derivation of the term "Naga" is uncertain. Possible origins include: (1) the Sanskrit term for "mountain"; (2) the Kachari term for "young man" or "warrior"; (3) the word for "people" common to several Tibeto-Burman languages. In any case the name has been applied to the Naga highlanders since the 19th century by neighboring people of the plains, who also tend to include such non-Naga tribes as the Abor (Adi) and Dafla under the term.

Until recently the term Naga was not in general use among the Naga themselves, and while growing political cohesion and cultural unity have increased its popularity, many Naga still identify themselves as members of particular tribes.

Location and Terrain

The State of Nagaland is a long, narrow strip of hills, generally paralleling the south (left) bank of the Brahmaputra. Taking the State of Manipur as the southern base, Nagaland lies to the northeast, bordered on the east by Burma, on the north by the Tirap Frontier Division of India's NEFA, and by the broad valley of the Assam plains along the western foothills Nagaland is now divided into three Districts--Kohima, Mokokchung and

Tuensang--comprising those territories formerly known (under the 1957 GOI Act of the same name) as the Naga Hills Tuensang Area.

The entire country of Nagaland is covered with ranges of hills, sometimes distributed in mazes of spurs and ridges, sometimes (as in the vicinity of Kohima) disposed in gentle slopes.

Most Naga villages are situated on hill tops at elevations of 3-4000 feet, though some hills in the area rise about 6,000 feet. The highest peak in the Kohima District is Japvo, 9,890 feet. Annual rainfall averages 70-100 inches, and rivers and streams (but not lakes) are numerous.

While shifting cultivation has destroyed much of the area's forest cover, a considerable amount remains. The wild game population has been largely decimated by native hunters, however, and wild elephants, buffaloes, tigers, leopards, bears and deer are present only in small numbers. Among birds the great Indian hornbill is highly valued for its plumage.

Physical Type

In physique and appearance the Naga groups exhibit considerable variations on Indo-Mongoloid features, though all are noted as attractive, well-built people. The Angami are tall with regular features, for example, while the Sema are shorter and more conspicuously Mongoloid.

Skin color is typically light brown (often termed "gold"), but displays considerably variation, lighter tones (but not into the northern European range) being admired. Hair form ranges from straight through wavy, with some suggestions of Negrito admixture.

Language

Linguistic topography of Nagaland displays complicated dialectical variations. Numerous mutually unintelligible tongues are spoken and, due in part to traditional feuding, practically every village has a distinctive dialect.

Generally similarities exist among the Naga languages, however, which collectively belong to the Naga

group of the Tibeto-Burman family. These similarities tend to distinguish them from the majority of Tibeto-Burman tongues. In general, they are highly tonal and agglutinative. Other common features include (1) glottalized consonants, particularly in terminal position; (2) vowels which do not conform to conventional categorization and are described as "indistinct"; (3) aspirated liquids and nasal phonemes; (4) predominance of locative variety in the case system; (5) conjugational patterns displaying rich variety of moods and well-classified tenses; (6) prefixed or suffixed negatives; (7) nominal as well as numerical classificatory terms.

Lexical resemblances exist among certain languages of the Naga group, notably Angami, Sema, Lhota, Ao and Manipuri (Meithei). Close morphological parallels are found among Ao, Angami, Kachari, Manipuri and Mikir. Naga languages of Burma appear mainly related to Chin, though some may be closer to Kachin. None have written scripts.

For many years Nagas from different areas have conversed in broken Assamese. Notwithstanding the Nagas' desires for cultural as well as administrative separation from Assam, this lingua franca has proven useful in trade throughout the area and has promoted inter-tribal unity. Today, however, many Nagas have learned English and Hindi.

Village Organization and House Type

Naga villages often have dramatic settings, generally on prominent points along ridges. Formerly they were stockaded with stone walls, palisades, dykes, thorn fences or the like, and many had village gates with great wooden doors decorated with painted carvings in bas-relief, approached through narrow, winding trenches and defiles. A few of these features are retained sporadically, notably panjis, sharp bamboo poles with fire-hardened tips which are inserted upright in the ground.

Arrangement of village houses varies. Regular streets are found in Ao and Lhota communities. In most others the layout is less formalized.

Most Naga villages are divided into khels, or quarters, each with its own headmen and administration, and often corresponding to clan segmentation.

Houses tend to be large, size as well as style and decoration reflecting the importance of the owner. Construction on poles is common. Among some tribes the houses have high gables, projecting forward. Others are topped by crossed wooden horns. Verandahs are a typical feature, and decoration of large structures frequently includes carved and painted posts and beams, relics of great feasts, trophies of war and the hunt, and so on.

The morung, in effect a dormitory for unmarried males, is an important feature in many Naga villages, and many groups have corresponding accommodations for girls. The numerous activities centering around the morung include education and discipline of the young; inculcation of tribal mores and values; and training in manual arts, warfare and techniques of hunting and fishing. They are also ceremonial and recreational centers, and often play important roles in mate selection and mobilization of village labor. Ornate carving is characteristic of morung architecture, and decorations formerly included skulls and trophy heads.

Agriculture and Food Supply

Agriculture in one or more forms is practiced by all Naga tribes and the general tenor of tribal life is geared to requirements of the cultivation cycle. Some Naga groups (notably the Angami and Tangkhul) emphasize rice growing on elaborate irrigated terraces. Other employ dry cultivation.

Most Nagas also practice non-irrigated shifting cultivation of the slash-and-burn type to some extent. The practice is termed jhuming, and the areas thus cultivated are jhums. The normal procedure involves clearing forest land along high ridges and burning the dried trees to increase fertility of the soil. The land is worked with hoes or similar implements (not ploughs), and one or two crops are raised before it is abandoned to fallow for a number of years. Sedentary village life is possible in conjunction with agriculture of this type since villages or tribes maintain a number of jhuming areas exploited in rotation. Shifting cultivation of this sort is the predominant practice among Naga groups of Burma.

In some Naga areas, millet, taro or Job's tears (Coix lachryma-jobi) are the staples, supplemented

by rice, maize, sorghum, yams and sago. Millet is often grown on dry terraces among pollarded alders. Cotton, beans, sweet potatoes, pumpkins and tobacco are also grown.

Pigs and cattle are kept, and mithuns (the domesticated bison, Bos frontalis) have generally displaced the semi-feral buffalo. Meat of all kinds is important in the Naga diet, with preference for beef and pork, though individual and clan taboos occasionally prohibit its consumption. Dogs are reared for food as well as hunting. Fishing is economically important among many Naga tribes, and often involves use of poisons which kill or stun the fish.

Tea is a popular drink, and use of milk, until recently tabooed, is increasing. The favorite drink, however, is rice beer, a palatable soup of mild alcoholic content important in Naga diet as a source of essential nutrients.

Clothing and Adornment

Styles in Naga dress vary widely and are changing rapidly, though they tend to be defined by rigid protocal and typically indicate the individual's relative wealth, age, warfare exploits and social rank.

Most Nagas have a refined sense of color and design, and their ceremonial finery is often impressive, typically employing feathers, cowries and other shells, bamboo, bone, beads, fur, ivory, red-dyed goat's hair and native textiles. Certain groups (mainly the Konyak and the Eastern Rengma) were formerly known as "Naked Nagas", but the term is no longer accurate.

Arts and Industries

Textiles in great variety are woven on simple tension looms and dyed by Naga women. Some skill in wood carving is practically universal, and ceramic technology has had mild development among some tribes. Extensive and ingenious uses are made of bamboo among all Naga groups.

The dao (a bill or hatchet-like implement) is perhaps the most common item in Naga material culture, serving as a weapon, cultivator and general-purpose tool. The principal weapon is the throwing spear, though some

tribes use bows or cross-bows, and at least the Konyak people have forged simple muzzle-loading guns for some generations. Expert blacksmithing is still found among some of the other tribes as well.

Much of Naga material culture confirms historical ties with Indonesia and Melanesia. Noteworthy examples are the huge, membraneless wooden drums (technically xylophones) made by the northern Naga tribes. Often suggestive of dugout canoes, with large carved figureheads, these drums are beaten to announce festivals, celebrate important events, raise alarms and to summon warriors for combat. They have a range of several miles. Other instruments are used in music and dance, popular throughout Naga society but most highly developed among southern groups.

High esthetic development characterizes the Naga. They are notably sensitive to form and color, and decorate most of their belongings. An unusually rich vein of poetic thought and a high capacity for romantic love is found in their abundant but little-known oral literature.

Sociopolitical Organization

Patterns of Naga political organization display a great range of emphases from practical dictatorship to extreme democracy. Hereditary chieftanship is the rule among the Sema and Chang groups. Among the Konyak sociopolitical control is in the hands of autocratic chiefs, considered so sacred that commoners may not stand before them. Political structure of the Ao people tends toward gerontocracy, with authority in the hands of councils of elders who represent main families of each village. At the democratic extreme are such tribes as the Angami, Lhota and Rengma, among some of whom village political machinery is virtually absent.

In Naga social organization, patrilineal exogamy, often formalized and elaborated in clan structure, is the rule, though there are indications of persisting matrilineal and perhaps totemistic systems as well as of leviritic polyandry. Inheritance of land is invariably in the male line.

Some tribes (including the Sema and Chang) practice polygyny, though monogamy is more common, divorce being easy and frequent.

Basic interests of the average Naga tribesman lie in his family, clan, khel and village. He is passionately attached to his land and crops, to his network of kin ties, and to the local machinery of social, political and ceremonial life. This attachment underlies the continuing authority and efficacy of native justice and community management, in which tribal elders and the institution of the morung play important roles. In this context, the main political ambition of the average tribesman has long been, and continues to be, autonomy for the Naga peoples.

Religion, Beliefs and Ceremonial Life

Naga religion is a variation on animistic belief systems common throughout tribal India. There is a vaguely conceived supreme creator and many minor deities, ghosts and spirits of rivers, hills, trees, and the like. In effect, all Nature is considered alive with unseen forces. Priests and medicine men placate these spirits, banishing those which cause disease and attracting those which aid and protect man and his activities. Such religious authorities take the lead in rites and festivals calculated to ensure bounty and good fortune in crop cultivation, marriage and other ventures involving risk or vulnerability to malevolent forces. Often such religious personnel have considerable political authority as well.

Ceremonial taboos, religious prohibitions and the like, collectively termed gennas, preoccupy the Nagas. All rites and festivals observed by social units within the tribe involve such prohibitions, which alter normal routine and social interaction. The term genna has therefore come to be applied to all occasions and observances at and by which a particular social unit consolidates its activities. Each stage of rice cultivation is marked by gennas to ensure success of the crop. Tribe-wide gennas may involve temporary, periodic or permanent prohibition of certain foods or activities--or may make them mandatory. Village-wide gennas commonly relate to prevention of illness or veneration of ancestors. Gennas may be observed following a death, disaster or the return of warriors. Gennas may similarly apply to clans, households, age-groups and individuals.

Lycanthropy is elaborately developed among many Naga groups and some entire villages are believed inhabited by were-tigers and were-leopard people. Many

beliefs relate to presumed intimate associations of soul or spirit between humans and tigers.

Naga notions of an after-life are vague and varied, though all groups believe the soul does not perish at death. Some groups believe in a subterranean abode of the dead. Others believe souls go to after-worlds in the directions of the sunrise (for the good) or sunset (for the bad). Many Nagas believe that souls take the form of insects after death, butterflies in particular.

Funerary practices vary greatly. Some groups (such as the Konyak) expose their corpses on platforms. Other practice burial, cremation or desiccation. Megalithic monuments are erected to commemorate the dead among some tribes (such as the Angamis) as well as for a number of other magical, religious and ceremonial purposes.

Head-hunting virtually ceased with effective British control over the Naga Hills area, though it continued in the Tuensang region until recently. The last recorded case occurred in 1958. In former times the practice was apparently based on the Naga belief that vital soul-matter or powerful essence resides in the human head. Taking a head therefore brought new and vital energy to the warrior and his village. As well as enhancing fertility of crops, animals and humans, head-hunting brought fame and prestige to the young warrior, increasing his choice among desirable females. Many customs formerly associated with head-hunting are still found among the Nagas, including particular dances, costumes, ritual paraphernalia, symbols attesting warfare exploits, and trees for displaying trophy heads.

A central feature of traditional Naga ceremonial life is the giving of so-called feasts of merit. Generally these are a sequence of ceremonies, increasing in social and sacred significance, culminating in sacrifice of a mithun. By sponsoring such feasts an individual (married males only) acquires rank and honors, both in this world and the next, and is entitled to wear distinctive clothing and ornaments and to decorate the facade of his house in distinctive manner. The Nagas have had little interest in Hinduism, but their feasts of merit show many parallels with ancient Vedic sacrificial rites.

Christian missionary work has had considerable impact among some Naga groups, not only on belief systems but on tribal life in general. Elimination of the varied functions of the morung, plus bans on rice

beer and numerous pagan customs, have resulted in pronounced social, economic and political disorganization among some tribes.

Change and Assimilation

Missionary activity, government administration, two World Wars and expansion of transportation and communication facilities have induced noteworthy departures from Naga aboriginal culture, many of them contributing to social, economic and political instability.

Superficial change is evident in increasing Naga acceptance of Western hats and shoes, brassieres, lipstick, flashlights, aluminum utensils, and a variety of junk jewelry and plastic gadgetry. More fundamental changes have come with the decline or extinction of inter-tribal warfare, head-hunting, slavery and merit-feasting. Numerous aspects of traditional ceremonialism, religion, arts, crafts and sociopolitical life, formerly geared to warfare and feasting as main themes of Naga culture, have undergone consequent decay. An important example is deterioration of the morung, a key institution of Naga social, economic and political organization which formerly ensured stability and continuity in tribal life through manifold functions in manpower mobilization, education and training, mate selection and marriage, and general community management.

Conversion to Christianity, stressing personal salvation, has introduced a new individualism among some Naga groups in place of former community espirit. In addition, increased literacy and learning have encouraged secular appetites among the younger generation and have brought waning interest in land and agriculture, contempt for menial labor and desires for white-collar jobs and urban amenities.

Poverty and hunger are generally cited as the principal contemporary problems among the Naga. The Indian Government appears to perceive the vast efforts in education and technical aid required to improve conditions, and great confidence has been expressed in community development projects in Nagaland said to be getting underway in 1963. Lack of trained personnel for such programs remains a prime deficiency, however.

Further obstacles to Naga advancement and stabilization of conditions in Nagaland as a new state

in the Indian Union relate to the area's low population density and lack of a viable economy. Revenues are therefore trivial in proportion to expenditures, not only for needed development programs, but for normal administrative purposes as well. These considerations were stressed by the Indian Government in opposing Naga independence, which was viewed as detrimental to tribal as well as national interests. In the present situation, as an outcome of Naga insistence that they are Indians only by virtue of British intervention in the area, India has an impoverished and underdeveloped state on one of its critical frontiers. In view of factors which have undermined many aspects of traditional Naga culture without supplying functionally effective substitutes, statehood status for the Naga is no automatic guarantee of social progress or political stability in the area.

2. PROFILES OF PRINCIPAL NAGA TRIBES

(1) ANGAMI NAGAS

Location

The current estimated population of the Angami Nagas is 30,000. Other recent information is negligible.

In 1921 the Angami were reported as the largest Naga tribe in the Naga Hills District, where they also occupied the greatest area. According to information of that date, they are situated in an area bounded on the north by a line running from a point slightly south of where the Dayang (Diyung) River enters the plains, through the peaks of Thevukepu above Themoketsa (most southerly of the Rengma villages) and Mutuhu (on the edge of the Sema country), to the confluence of the Loi and Tizu Rivers between Kivekhu and Chipokitema. Eastward from this point to the Barail range the border of Angami territory generally coincides with the eastern boundary of the Naga Hills District. On the south the Angamis are bounded by the Barail range and the Diphu River, and on the west by the Nambar forest.

With the exception of the Memi group of Eastern Angamis (below) who live further to the southeast, all but one or two Angami villages are said to lie within the area described.

Inter-Tribal Affiliations

The Kacha Nagas are apparently derived from the Angamis. While the two speak different languages, they are similar in dress and in earlier time the Kachas were subject to the Khonoma group of Western Angami (below). The Kabui Nagas of Manipur are also closely related to the Kacha Nagas.

An identical creation myth, attributing their origin to the Kezakenoma Stone in the Kezami village of the same name, is found among the Lhota and Sema Nagas as well as the Angami.

Tribal Divisions

The Angami are distributed in the following main divisions, groups and villages:

a. Western Angami:

Tengima or Khonoma group, including the six large villages of Khonoma, Sachema, Mezoma, Kirufema, Jotsoma and Kigwema, plus their sattelite communities, Thekrojenoma and Sachenobama;

Chakroma group of villages nearer the plains, including Rozephima, Chimokedima (Samaguting), Kabvoma Piphima, Pherima, Meziphima, Chowuma (Choloma) and Setikima;

Kohima group, including Kohima and neighboring villages;

Viswema or Dzunokehena group, to the south of the Kohima group;

b. Eastern Angami:

Kezami group, of which Kezabama and Kezakenoma are the principal villages;

Chakrima or Chakrama group, east and northeast of the Kohima group;

Memi group, comprising 16 villages on the Kezama borders.

Village Organization

a. Location and Layout

Angami villages are built on summits of hills or ridges. Previous to annexation they were elaborately fortified with huge carved gates. Still remaining are pitfalls, deep ditches once filled with panjis, and tortuous approaches under high banks with masses of

prickly creepers overhead. Clans, of which there were formerly two to eight per village, have residence areas separated by massive stone walls, which also encircle some of the Angami villages.

Houses are arranged in irregular fashion, often facing east. Small gardens are located near the houses. Stone lookout or sitting platforms with tiers of seats are located in front of houses or on wall tops. Stone graves with life-size effigies, often covered with ornaments and garment of the dead, are found inside the villages.

b. Monoliths

Numerous monoliths are found in and around the Angami villages, erected at gennas when individuals have feasted the community. Such stones are erected in so-called stone-dragging or stone-pulling ceremonies by the clans or villages of the persons performing the gennas. A man who has performed the stone-pulling ceremony may use wooden shingles instead of thatch on his house. Gennas confer social status in a series of steps, in which elaborate rites with special costumes take place and decoration of the village is involved. Cenotaphs or memorial stones are also erected.

c. House Type

The front gable of the Angami house is decorated with symbols of valor and carvings proclaiming the wealth, status and accomplishments of the owner. The eaves nearly touch the ground, and the horned roof tree is supported by heavy posts. The sides and back of the house are large hewn boards, those in front being carved.

The house interior is divided into three compartments. One contains a hearth and beds of rough planks. The liquor vat is customarily in a rear room. There are seldom more than five occupants per house and children are not numerous.

d. Morungs

The institution of the morung, an important feature among many of the Naga tribes, is of little consequence in Angami life, though a house is occasionally set aside for young men.

e. Clans

The basic units of Angami village organization are exogamous clans. For many purposes each clan is a self-sufficient community, and rivalry between clans has long been a basic feature of Angami culture.

Political Organization

Gaonburas appointed by the Deputy Commissioner prior to creation of Nagaland supplanted former chiefs. Since annexation tribal disputes have been settled by the courts.

Agriculture and Diet

Cultivation of wet rice in irrigated, terraced fields is a distinctive feature of Angami villages. Maize, vegetables, cotton, gourds and chilies are grown in jhums.

The Angami eat meat of all kinds both from wild and domesticated animals. Wild plants used as vegetables include yams, sorrel, nettle tops, bamboo shoots and various ferns and fungoids. Tumeric and ginger are also gathered and grubs, dragonflies and grasshoppers are eaten. Angami women weave home-grown cotton.

(2) AO NAGAS

Location

The Ao Nagas occupy a portion of the Naga Hills bounded by the Dikhu River on the southeast, the plains on the northwest, by Konyak tribal territory on the east, and by the country of the Sema and Lhota Nagas on the southwest. Formerly they occupied Sematerritory up the Wokha-Bhandari bridle path in what is presently Lhota country. The current population of the Ao is estimated at 50,000

Ao country is pleasant, with unbroken ranges sloping gently toward moderate streams. Four parallel ranges dominate the area: (1) the Langbangkong range on the left bank of the Dikhu; (2) the Asukong to the northwest, a low and irregular range flanked by small

rivers; (3) the Changkikong, also to the northwest, named for the village of Changki located thereon; and (4) Chapvukong, a low range flanking the plains, named for the village of Chapvu.

Fertile land is ample and protected from Assamese immigrants by a heavy forest belt lying between the foothills and the plains. For some years the Ao have been on friendly terms with Assamese rulers of the plains area. In former times, however, they were constantly at war with the Sema Nagas, their trans-Dikhu neighbors.

Ao country was annexed by the British in 1889 and subdivisional headquarters were established at Mokokchung.

Village Organization

a. Situation

The great Ao villages are located at the highest points on the long, straight ranges which are the conspicuous features of Ao country. The valleys are uninhabited.

Each village is surrounded by a belt of bamboo clumps and light jungle, kept thin by wandering cattle and pigs. The main paths along the tops of the ranges pass through the villages, and avenues of fine spear-oaks planted years ago flank the paths. These trees are not native to the area and are said to have been brought by the Ao in early migrations from elsewhere. These avenues belong to the villages, and persons damaging the trees are fined by the elders.

b. Fortification

In former times there were gates at each end of each village, with hugh doors made of single planks ornamented with carved circles. Setting up a new gate was once an occasion for displaying a trophy head, carried through the gate in triumph. In the peaceful period of recent years these gates have been allowed to rot and fall away. Lookout platforms are located beside the gates, with vines trained over them to conceal the gate guards.

A wall of panjis generally surrounds each village, and while no longer needed for protection these are annually renewed in some village in festive ceremonies which take place in November. The young men work all day on the restoration and then adjourn to beer parties in the girls' dormitories.

c. Divisions and Layout

Three dialect groups are found among the Ao: Chongli, Changki and Mongsen. Members of these three groups live side by side in many villages. In some cases each occupies a section of the village (termed a muphu), identifiable by distinctive customs.

Each village is divided into two or more khels. Between the muphus and khels are open spaces which serve as fire lanes. The Ao people generally identify themselves, however, as belonging to a particular morung, each of which is occupied by one or more clans.

Granaries, which are miniature houses built on piles two or three feet off the ground, are located away from the village for fire protection. In an open space in each khel or village there is a head-tree, formerly hung with trophy heads.

d. House Type

Village streets are arranged irregularly and lined with nearly contiguous houses. Rear portions of the houses are supported on poles.

The social status and achievements of each house owner can be read precisely from structural and ornamental features of his house. While details differ from village to village, those acquainted with local customs and symbolism can readily tell what feasts of merit the owner has given and as well as his position in the local status hierarchy. Normally the front portion of the house reveals status, each feast of merit entitling the owner to further extend the eaves to a semi-circular apse supported in front by a carved post. The way in which the eaves are projected differs between the Eastern and Western Ao. The Chonglis build bamboo platforms to signify additional feasts of merit.

Additionally, the gable of one's house should be higher than one's neighbor's to indicate one is not subservient, and houses on opposite sides of a street should not face each other directly lest evil influences be wafted across.

e. Morungs

Ao morungs are large hall-like structures (typically about 20 by 50 feet), decorated with great beams carved in the forms of humans and tigers. The roof projects dramatically in a high peak. The morung is fenced and guarded, and women are forbidden.

Large drums hollowed from huge logs and carved with animal figures are housed near the morung. Such drums (actually xylophones) are reported up to 37 feet long and 14 feet in diameter. They are absent, however, among the Changki division of the Ao and in the Mongsen villages of the Chapvukong.

Economy

Land is held by clans, morungs, private individuals or by each village in common. Most land is now privately owned. Blocks of land are cultivated collectively by khels or by entire villages. Clearing paths is likewise a community effort, initiated with ceremonies and festivities of the sort which generally characterize agriculture and similar activity among the Ao.

Rice is the staple food. Generally it is lent rather than sold, the lender thereby gaining status. In the process rice becomes a commodity, and a one-year six-basket loan must be repaid with ten baskets. If repayment is delinquent, 20 baskets are due the second year, 40 the third.

Vegetables and cotton are also grown. Opium was formerly confined to Merangkong and other villages with high malaria incidence on the outer range.

Social Organization

The village is the political unit of Ao society, though khels are run as separate organizations. Control of local affairs is in the hands of a council whose method of election and tenure of office differ from one

dialect group to another. There is no institution corresponding to hereditary chieftanship.

Superimposed on these aspects of Ao social structure is a male age-grade system. Each village is divided into age groups to which various communal duties are assigned. Each three years a new group of boys in the same three-year age interval enters the morung. Thereafter an individual retains permanent affiliation with his age-grade group. Members of younger age grades (termed the "unripe gang") work as menials for the next older group. Gradually their duties change until they become council members. At each step they receive appropriate shares of meat at morung feasts. As elders they become priests and their advice is solicited on all important matters.

Assignment and performance of communal tasks through the age-grade structure is said to operate with machine-like percision, even in Ao communities with populations up to 2,000. At the end of each "generation" all members of khel councils are expected to vacate their offices and be replaced by a new body, however, and reports suggest that pitched battles are not uncommon at such times, office-holders being disinclined to acknowledge the ends of their tenure.

Religion

Medicine men and women, who employ trances, occult rites and interpret omens, are called in to deal with many abnormal conditions and situations. Lycanthropy occurs, but is not as common as among the Sema Nagas.

Christian influence is said to have devastated Ao traditions. Christian tribal converts have been forbidden to join in tribal storytelling and singing, customs handed down for many generations. Feasts of merit have been forbidden, and a traditional mechanism for distributing wealth and food thereby destroyed. Girls with mission educations are said to find it difficult to settle down to village life, thus being the more likely to fall into loose and idle ways.

(3) CHAKHESANG NAGAS

Chakhesang is the name adopted in 1946 by a composite Naga group comprised of two Southern Angami groups

(the Chakru and Khezha), a group of Sangtam people, and two Rengma villages lying east of Kohima and north of Manipur. A recent population estimate for the total Chakhesang group is 31,000.

(4) CHANG NAGAS

Location and Affiliations

The Chang Nagas are sometimes called the Mozung tribe. They are located across the Dikhu to the east of the Ao country, and are principally concentrated at Tuensang. Most other Chang villages are believed to have been derived from this community. The present population of the tribe is estimated at 17,000.

The Chang claim close kinship with the Yachumi Nagas. One authority has suggested they have racial affinity with the Singpho.

Clan Divisions and Tribal Organization

The principal clans of the Chang Nagas are the Chongpo, Ung, Lumao, Kangcho and Kudamji. The Chongpo clan is subdivided into the Shangdi, Hangwang, Hagiyung, Ungpong and Maava.

Political structure resembles that of the Sema in the presence of an all-powerful chief in each village, but differs in that Chang chiefs do not have the monopoly on land found among the Sema.

Costume and Adornment

The belt worn by the Chang is distinctive, being 4 to 6 inches wide and trimmed with cowrie shells and red dyed dog hair. Tattoo patterns are typically symmetrical, with leaves or fronds rising from a single base.

Religious Beliefs

The Chang have a superstitious awe of tigers and pythons, and it is taboo for a "true" Chang to touch either. Members of the Chongpo clan are said to be were-tigers.

Warfare

Forty years ago the Chang were described as among the most warlike of the Naga tribes, second only to the Sema. In the past they appear to have invaded Phom, Ao and Konyak territory, and to have taken over the Ao villages of Hoksam, Longla and Litam.

(5) KACHA NAGAS

Location and Composition

The term Kacha Nagas refers collectively to several tribes or tribal divisions, principally composed of Zemi, Lyeng (or Lyengma, Liangmi), Kabui and Maruong people. Reports indicate that these four group have been closely allied and have acted as a political unit for some years.

Originally the Kacha Nagas were located around Mekroma, but subsequent migrations led them across the Barail Range, mainly in the directions of Tehema and Khonoma. More recently their reported locations have been the Naga Hills District, Manipur, and along the Barak River as far south as the North Cachar Hills.

The Zemi, Lyeng and Maruong are located inside the former Naga Hills District to the south of the Angami Nagas, by whom they have been greatly influenced. The Zemi in particular have long been virtually subject to the Angami community of Khonoma. Languages of these Kacha divisions are distinct from the Angami tongue, however, as well as from each other. Closer alliance between these Kacha groups and the Kabui of Manipur than with other Naga tribes is indicated by more advanced development of dancing and singing among them and greater prominence of the morung system as a feature of Kacha tribal organization.

Historical Background

The Zemi first appeared in the Barail Range from the northeast and settled in the mountains south of the Kachari headquarters at Maibong, where they lived under Kachari rule for many years. With the fall of the Kachari Kingdom in the 16th century, the warlike Angami raided Zemi country and exacted tribute. Weaker Zemi villages in the north and east moved westward, passing through the already crowded Barail Range and later colonizing the

rolling hills beyond the Diyung Valley. Control was disputed between Kachari and Manipuri rulers, but the hill people acknowledged the authority of neither.

The British and waves of Kuki immigrants arrived simultaneously in the 19th century, the latter colonizing in Zemi territory and other areas in the hills and lowlands. Intense rivalry for possession of land developed. In 1918 the Kuki people rebelled against the British. In 1928 the Kabui, Zemi and Lyeng members of the Kacha Naga, who had many grudges against the Kuki, planned a full-scale massacre of them, but were prevented by the British. In 1931 the Kuki aided the British in subduing the Kacha.

For some generation there had been a local prophecy that a Naga king would arise one day, drive out the British and establish rule over "all who eat from the wooden platter" (i.e., the Naga tribes). In 1929, a Zemi tribesman from Kambiron named Jadonang proclaimed himself this Messiah. His ideas combined elements of Christianity, Hinduism and Zemi priestcraft. Eventually his followers resorted to human sacrifice and he was hanged by the British. Jadonang's chief priestess and disciple, a sixteen year old Kabui girl, survived, however, and established herself as a goddess. Amassing enormous tribute and securing allegiance of all of the Kacha Nagas, she proclaimed a Naga Kingdom in 1931 and planned a massacre of the Kuki. The Kuki aided the British in subduing the Kacha and the girl was jailed for 14 years (at direction of J. P. Mills, Naga authority who was then Deputy Commissioner at Kohima). Since that date, however, the Kacha Naga movement for Naga independence has continued in various forms.

(6) KALYO-KENGYU NAGAS

Location

The Kalyo-Kengyu overlap the India-Burma border. They are distributed from the Ti-Ho, a tributary of the Chindwin, to the Patkai Range, occupying territory east of the Chang, Yachung and Sangtam Nagas. The tribe extends south as far as the Somra tract in Burma, and includes the village of Makware, burned in 1911 by a British punitive expedition. Nieme and Karami are also Kalyo-Kengyu villages.

The Kalyo-Kengyu Nagas are referred to as the Bosorr by the Sema people, Aaoshed by the Chang, and Para by the Burmese.

Distinguishing Features

The name Kalyo-Kengyu means "men who live in stone houses," their dwellings typically having slate roofs. Formerly the Kalyo-Kengyu were well known as metalsmiths, producing fine spear heads and daos.

The typical costume is reported to include red cane helmets and leggings, with handwoven chaddars or shawls of indigo dyed cloth decorated with squares embroidered in red dyed dog hair. In the past the Kalyo-Kengyu manufactured ornaments, cane helments, gauntlets and leggings for surrounding tribes.

The Kalyo-Kengyu occupy territory which is virtually unadministered and unsurveyed. Current information is meager and no definitive study of the tribe has been made.

(7) KONYAK NAGAS

The Konyak tribe, with an estimated population of 63,000, appears to be the largest of the main Naga groups, though current information on them is meager. They are situated to the northeast of the Ao and Chang Nagas in the areas between the Dikhu and Disang Rivers, to the north of the Patkai Range, and south along the Patkai Range to the east of the territories occupied by the Phom and Chang tribes.

The people known as the Eastern Konyaks occupy the Tamlu region and the area northeast of the Dikhu, and extend along the borders of Sibsager and the Lakhimpur districts to the Patkais, east of the Phom and the Chang.

The Konyak are reported to have two main divisions, that known as the Shamnyuyungmang being the more democratic, the other being ruled by autocratic chiefs.

Until recently the Konyak were among the tribes known as Naked Nagas. The men wore tight belts of cane or the bark of the agar tree which reduced their waists to small size. The hair was worn in a long tail wound in a knot at the back of the head and held with a pin of wood or bone.

Architecture of the Konyak morung is distinctive, featuring poles projecting through a straw-thatched roof and great posts carved with figures of men, tigers, snakes and monkeys.

(8) LHOTA NAGAS

Location

The Lhota Nagas occupy the scenic drainage area of the middle and lower Dayang River and its tributaries, down to the point where it enters the plains. The Dayang, unfordable most of the year, divides the tribe into two sections. Lhota on the left bank are known as the Ndrung, those on the right bank as the Liye.

Noteworthy climatic extremes are represented in Lhota territory, ranging from frost zones in the high spurs of Wokha Hill to the unbearable heat radiated from the sandstone in the malaria-ridden foothills bordering the plains.

The current estimated population of the Lhota is 23,500.

Historical Background

The main body of the Lhota Nagas may have a southern origin in common with the Sangtams, perhaps in the Chindwin valley of Burma.

Many Lhota villages hold grants of land in the plains, originally given by the Ahom Rajas with the understanding that the Lhota would not take Ahom heads. There is no record of fighting between the Lhota and Assamese since the 17th century.

In 1875, a Captain Butler, in charge of a survey party, was ambushed and killed by tribesmen of the village of Pangti. The Lakhuti villagers, who were settling an old score with the Pangtis, their traditional enemies, had deceived them into this treachery, assuring them they would join the attack. As a result, Pangti was burned by the British, and in 1878 a stockade was established at Wokha and all Ndrung villages of the Lhota were annexed. The remaining Lhota settlements were annexed in 1889.

Warfare between Lhota villages has been rare, and intra-tribal head hunting is against ancient Lhota law. During the northward migration of the Lhota there was considerable conflict with the Ao Nagas, however, who once held a greater part of what is now Lhota country north of the present bridle path from Wokha to the plains. During these conflicts entire Ao villages were expelled, and today the Ao are still referred to as uri ("enemy") by the Lhota.

General Characteristics

Lhota temperament is generally described as reserved. In common with most Nagas, they believe that illness or misfortune will fall on one who is laughed at or is the object of derision.

Standards of morality differ from village to village. Unlike Ao and Sema husbands who openly boast of philandering and immorality, Lhota men are said to be relatively faithful.

In attitudes toward parents the Lhota stand midway between the Konyak, who consider it a chief duty to live with and support their parents, and the Ao, who may turn them out to die in a hut lest their dying contaminate the house.

One notewrothy respect in which the Lhota differed from other Naga tribes as of two generations ago was their readiness to commit suicide for seemingly trivial reasons. Examples reported as typical include a man who hanged himself because he owed a small village fine. Joint suicides by poison, resulting from frustrated love affairs, were said to be the most common form.

Village Organization

a. Situation and Layout

With the exception of villages situated on spurs running down from the great peak of Wokha Hill, Lhota communities are built atop ridges, usually near springs. Typically there is a main entrance to the village at either end, with smaller paths leading down to fields from the sides of the village.

Permanent narrow paths following the topmost crests of the ranges connect the villages. These can be negotiated by men walking single file. Where the rock is soft sandstone, as near Tsori, extremely steep ascents are made by toe-holds cut in the rock. Small streams and ditches are bridged with large trees or stout poles laid in parallel fashion. Cane bridges are constructed across wider streams such as the Chebi. Young trees are planted near those which serve as bridgeheads to provide substitutes if the latter are washed away.

Lhota villages range in size from a dozen to 350 houses or more. The village consists of one long street with houses facing inward on each side. In the middle of the street are graves and genna stones, the latter opposite the houses of their owners. The main bachelors' residence (called a champo in Lhota villages rather than morung) usually stands at the end of the village facing down the street.

b. Khel Divisions

All Lhota villages except the smallest are divided into khels, the separations often indicated by strips of open land. In some instances a single khel is occupied by a single clan, but often the Lhota khels are merely convenient divisions of the community, each containing members of various clans. Normally an individual remains in the khel of his birth, though he may move if he desires.

There is often one champo in each khel. Work teams are composed of children of neighbors from the same khel. Boys and girls work together, and may be hired for the day by anyone needing help in return for a small wage and a mid-day meal.

c. Land Tenure

Public lands and unused areas near the village, together with rights to poison certain water for fish, are held in common by the community. In addition, every champo controls land of its own worked by boys of the champo. A large portion of Lhota land is held and worked in common by clan members.

d. House Type

Lhota houses vary from poor hovels owned by widows to those of rich men which may have dimensions

of 18 by 30 feet or more. The front is usually semi-circular with a sloping ridge. Typical features are eathen floors, sitting platforms, storerooms, and separate quarters for each wife. Wealthy men may have three wives, each with her own hearth and sleeping cubicle.

Furniture includes large pounding tables, log liquor vats and plank beds.

House building is elaborately ritualized among the Lhota. A dreamer (hahang), of which there are said to be three in each village, is consulted on various aspects of construction. If the owner has undergone the ceremony of dragging a stone, for example, the bamboo on the platform is laid a certain way. Evil spirits are expelled from the new dwelling and opening ceremonies are held.

e. The Champo

The Lhota champo, generally comparable to the morung among other Naga tribes, is the sleeping place for all males from the time they don dao-holders until marriage. Only those who remain at home to care for an ailing or widowed mother are exempt. The champo is forbidden to women.

The champo building may be some 15 by 40 feet, and usually has a handsome curving roof-tree, low at the back with bamboo horns at each beam projection. Ornamental reed tassels hang at each end, where the eaves nearly touch the ground. Inner posts, and the front post in the middle of the facade, are carved with representations of mithuns and hornbills. At the base of the front post are stones on which the good fortune of the champo is thought to rest.

Fires are made in hearths of pounded-earth. Bamboo partitions enclose sleeping benches of rough-hewn planks. The champo is usually rebuilt every nine years, the occasion being a village festival.

Technology

The Lhota make their own pottery, but blacksmithing is considered unlucky and metal implements are supplied by the Rengma Nagas. The Lhota are expert carvers and basketmakers, and weaving is down by the women.

Sociopolitical Organization

Lhota villages usually operate as undivided wholes, but where khels are large the leaders of each khel may manage local affairs.

The villages are managed by informal councils (pangis) of male elders (sotsoi, or "meat-eaters") and men of influence. Government administration is accomplished through government-selected headmen. Formerly the Lhota had hereditary chiefs, descended from village founders.

Religion, Magic and Superstition

a. Gennas

A Lhota man's wealth and social status are known by the number of gennas he has performed. Stone-dragging is one such ceremony which brings status. The full series is twenty-five, a feat few attain, and the first genna is at the dragging of one stone.

The genna is a public feast given for the whole village. Men of the village, some in full dancing dress, go for the stone, which may be several miles from the village, and make a bamboo frame on which the stone is lashed with vines and creepers. The stone is then taken up and carried to the front of the sponsor's house, where it is installed with elaborate rites. Each genna entitles a man to wear clothing of a particular sort, woven by his womenfolk.

b. Head-Trees

A large tree, generally of the fiscus family, is situated on a mound in the middle of each Lhota village. Sacred stones surround the roots. A fence is placed around the tree whenever a genna is performed. Formerly heads of enemies were placed on long bamboo poles and propped in the branches of such trees. In some villages these trees are regarded as too sacred to be photographed.

c. Miscellaneous Beliefs

Small water-worn pebbles are thought to have magical properties and are placed in granaries and under house posts. Love potions are used in Lhota villages near the plains. Dreams and ghosts play important parts in the daily life of the Lhota people.

d. Missionary Influence

As early as the World War I period observers of Lhota culture noted that the tribe was losing many of its traditional distinctive features and was in danger of disorganization and decline due to the combined influences of American Baptist missionary work and the encroachment of Hindu culture from the neighboring Assamese and Nepali settlers on the plains. Hindu influence was more pronounced in the south. Baptist influence emanated from Impur in the Ao country, where, by the period indicated, American missionaries had already destroyed traditional stone religious monuments and grossly altered much of tribal culture.

(9) PHOM NAGAS

The estimated current population of Phom Nagas, neighbors of the Konyak, is 13,000. The tribe appears confined to four villages: Hukpang, Pongching, Ourangkong and Mongnyu.

The Phom people have close cultural ties with the Chang Nagas. Men of the Phom tribe are indistinguishable from the Chang in dress and similar in tattooing. Phom women have tattoos on the legs but not the face, and wear beads which differ from those of the Chang.

(10) RENGMA NAGAS

Main Divisions

Until comparatively recent times the Rengma and Lhota peoples were one tribe, unified by joint migration. Today they retain many cultural parallels but are separate tribes, the Lhota living to the north of the Rengma. The majority of the Rengma proper occupy a small triangle north of the Angami country.

With a current estimated population of 5,000 the Rengma are the smallest of the main Naga tribes. There are two principal divisions. The larger concentration is the Western Rengma, who inhabit spurs of the long ridge running northeast from Nidzukru Hill to Wokha Hill. Around 1830 a portion of this Western Rengma group migrated to the Mikir Hills, where they are now distributed in several dozen villages which in 1937 totalled roughly 700 households.

The other main division of the tribe is the Eastern Rengma, who are among the people known as Naked Nagas. This group separated from the Northern (Ntenyi) section of the Western Rengma many generations ago, and has since lived in three communities isolated by impenetrable mountains and hostile Naga neighbors.

Western Rengma

a. Sections and Villages

The Western Rengma are in turn divided into two sections. These speak different languages and differ considerably in customs. They occupy 12 villages, all except Chosinyu being on spurs of Therugu Hill. These Western Rengma villages are:

Northern Section (Ntenyi):

Kotsenyu (Kontsenyu)

Kotsenishinyu

Kitagha

Tesophenvu (half of village)

Southern Section (Nzong):

Tesophenvu (half of village)

Tseminyu

Phesinyu (Phensinyu)

Sentenyu

Chosinyu

Tsokonyu

Therugunyu

Thegwepegedenyu (Thegwepekenyu)

Nishinyu

There are six exogamous clans among the Western Rengma, their multiplicity resulting from migration and subdivision.

b. General Characteristics

The Rengma are characterized as full of contradictions, being dour but often wildly excitable, brave yet liable to panic, inhospitable to strangers but firm friends. They are said to be addicted to squabbling, argument and wild quarreling, and to develop bitter hatred despite capacity for warm friendship. In sexual patterns some groups are extremely strict, others far more liberal.

The Rengma are also described as sensitive and high strung; an angry word one day may bring tears of remorse the next morning. They are an extremely superstitious people, believing in black magic, magical powers and the existence of were-tigers.

c. Intervillage Feuding

Feuding between villages was formerly common. For many years Government orders prohibited men from visiting between villages because of the risk of attacks on small parties. Hatred between villages of Tseminyu and Tesophenyu was particularly pronounced.

d. Village Organization

Location and Layout

Villages of the Western Rengma are located on a flat-topped spur with steep slopes at each side. Formerly they were fortified with carved wooden gates, ornamented with carvings of human heads. The gates have decayed, but thorny creepers planted over panjis remain. Shade oak trees line the steep paths down to the fields.

Khels

Every village is divided into khels, some of which are named after clans. There is generally one morung for each khel, though occasionally more if the khel is wealthy. Usually one clan predominates in each khel. Christians have separated from non-Christians in some cases. The separate Baptist khel at Tzeminyu is conspicuous, since its buildings have corrugated iron roofs which offend local taste, reflect light and hold the heat.

House Type

Houses are built of bamboo, wooden posts and thatch, and are situated in short lines. They

are about 16 feet wide at the rear, and are semicircular in front with a width of 20 to 24 feet. In villages in cool locations there is a partition half way across to conserve heat from the hearth. In warmer locations the house is open for air circulation.

A pounding table, an extra hearth and guest beds are in an outer room behind the verandah. Granaries are separate. The number of feasts of merit which the man of the house has given is indicated by the shape and ornamentation of the house front. Projecting eaves, extended verandah and house horns indicate the number and grade of mithun sacrifices made by the house.

Morungs

The morungs are the most ornate buildings in Rengma villages, being elaborately carved and decorated. Their dimensions average some 12 by 50 feet.

Boys enter the morung around the age of seven. Aside from functions in training, the morung is also a sanctuary. No criminal or fugitive can be apprehended and no one can be struck or abused therein. Members of the khel protect the morung and its traditions. Stealing and other crimes are taboo inside the morung.

No woman has ever been known to enter a men's morung. Girls' dormitories are in the front rooms of several large houses in each khel, and males are likewise barred from these. Girls also enter at the age of seven.

Head Trees

A tree for the hanging of trophy heads is found in all villages of the Western Rengma. It is said to be invariably a fiscus tree with sacred stones placed beneath.

e. Economy

Land is held by clans or individuals. There are blocks of common land for jhumming and firewood collection.

f. Village Government

Before annexation by the British, the Rengma had hereditary clan chiefs. Since the loss of this autocratic structure no alternative form of government has evolved and village problems have come to the courts or locally appointed officials.

g. Religion

Religious power is in the hands of priests whose chief duty is to announce genna days.

Customs and traditions of the Western Rengma have been profoundly affected by American Baptist missionary work. While current data are unavailable, in the period of the early 1940's the older men of the tribe were said to be extremely opposed to missionary influence, but helpless in countering the new teachings. Baptist innovations included banning feasts of merit and prohibiting use of the morungs.

Eastern Rengma

a. Location

The Eastern Rengma call themselves Anyo. They are mainly confined to three villages on the eastern (Burmese) side of the Barail watershed: Meluri (Melomi), Sahunya (Sohemi) and Lephori (Lapvomi), of which Meluri is the largest. All are located in the Tizu River valley not far from its junction with the Tiho, a main tributary of the Chindwin. The nearby village of Temimi has a mixed population of Eastern Rengma and Sangtam people.

Although the Eastern Rengma villages are located only about 20 miles from the main body of the tribe, their isolation for many generations has produced marked cultural differences. Sema and Angami people, plus the high range which forms the watershed between Assam and Burma, have kept them apart. Other tribes neighboring the Eastern Rengma are the Tangkhul to the south, the Southern Sangtam to the north and east, and the Eastern Angami on the west.

b. Clothing and Adornment

Until recently the Eastern Rengma were among the groups known as Naked Nagas. Ceremonial clothing

was worn, however, indicating the number of feasts of merit the individual had given, the number of heads taken, and the like. The right to wear certain ornaments was also acquired by the taking of heads.

Ornaments used throughout the Rengma region are made by the Kalyo-Kengyu tribe, who also make cane gauntlets, leggings and tall red cane hats, ornamented with horns and crests of red goat's hair, which are used in dances.

c. Village Organization

Layout

Villages of the Eastern Rengma are surrounded by broad belts of carefully fenced garden land, usually planted to garlic and a few vegetables. Narrow paths connect with granaries beyond. Houses are nearly contiguous and are built in long lines on rough stone abutments which provide level construction sites.

Khels

Division of the villages into khels is comparable to the Western Rengma. Meluri has four khels; the other Eastern Rengma villages have three each.

Morungs

Morungs are similar to those of the Western Rengma, differing somewhat in architectural detail, generally in the direction of more elaborate carving and decoration.

House Type

The Eastern Rengma house design differs slightly from that of the Western Rengma, being semicircular in back with a rear door for exit during raids. Floors are earth. The hearth is in the inner room. A pounding block made from the trunk of a large tree is usually at the front. Beds are hewn from single logs and stand on high legs.

d. Cultivation

The Eastern Rengma depend upon irrigated terracing for rice cultivation, and use jhums only for millet,

maize, vegetables and cotton. The gentle slopes of the Tizu are well suited to terracing, and this art has been learned from the neighboring Angami people. Channels carry water from small streams which fall into the Tizu.

(11) SANGTAM NAGAS

The current estimated population of the Sangtam Nagas is 20,700. At one time this tribe extended down the eastern border of the territory occupied by the Ao and Sema Nagas, from the Chang country to that of the Tangkhul and Eastern Rengma peoples. The Sema country has now been separated into two divisions by the northward movement of the Semas and the western shift of the Yachumi villages.

The Sangtam Nagas now consist of three main groups:

1. Lophomi, or Northern Sangtam
2. Tukomi, or Central Sangtam
3. Southern Sangtam

The Southern Sangtam villages include Primi, Photsimi and Phozami. Thachumi and Thomami are also apparently occupied by the Southern Sangtam. These villages adjoin the Eastern Rengma. The village of Temimi is occupied jointly by Southern Sangtam and Eastern Rengma. Otherwise little is known about the Southern Sangtam group.

The Tukomi Sangtam once extended west to the Tizu Valley but have now mixed with Sema Nagas moving eastward. The Semas have quickly gained control of Sangtam villages which they have penetrated.

The Lophomi group are said to resemble the Ao Nagas but to dress like the Chang.

(12) SEMA NAGAS

Location

The Sema Nagas are located northeast of the Angami country and number approximately 48,000. In broad terms they occupy the watershed area dividing Assam from Burma. In former times the Sema were said to have exacted taxes on all products being carried through their villages to or from the Burma border.

Reports earlier in the century indicate that the Sema are mainly distributed in the valleys of three large rivers and in the mountain ranges and plateaus which separate these. Most westerly of the three is the Dayang River, which rises at Japvo in the Angami country, flows north into the Sema area, then turns west and south and emerges from the hills through the territory of the Lhota Nagas. Thereafter it joins the Dhansiri, and eventually the Brahmaputra. The Dayang is referred to by the Semas as the Tapu.

The two other main rivers of the Sema country are the Tizu (or Tuzu) and the Tita (or Tutsa), which rise in the north and northeast of the area and flow south into the Lanier, reaching the sea via the Ti-Ho, the Chindwin and the Irrawaddy.

Formerly the Tizu was the boundary of British territory, dividing the Sema into two sections. Those under British administration lived in "enforced peace." The independent group expanded eastward as their population increased, and thereby escaped the perpetual scarcity which developed from an unfavorable land-population ratio in the Sema area under British control.

The Tita comprises the eastern border of Sema territory but as in the case of the Dayang there are a few Sema villages beyond it. These are said to be steadily moving east toward the Ti-Ho, and at present the trans-Tita Sema population may be substantial.

On the south the Sema are bordered by the Angami Nagas, and on the west by the Rengma and Lhota people. The Ao and Lophomi Sangtam are on the north, the Yachumi and Tukomi Sangtam to the east. On the northeast the Sema adjoin the Chang, and on the southeast the Eastern Rengma.

Sema tribesmen of villages in the cooler highland zones of the eastern portion of Sema territory are referred to as Azhomi ("cold-place men"). Those from the hoter lowland villages to the west are known as Ghabomi ("hot-place men").

Affiliations With Other Tribes

The Sema are related to the Chekrama Angami in that a large number of the latter are of Sema origin. Both the Sema and Chekrama languages are spoken in such villages.

Sema people of Lazemi and some of the villages in the Dayang Valley have had considerable admixture with the Tengima Angami, and in some cases with the Rengma. Their language and customs have been considerably influenced in the course of these contacts, distinguishing them from the bulk of Sema peoples.

Among the Northern Sema there is considerable admixture with the Sangtam and Ao Nagas, and to the east with the Tukomi Sangtam. Chang-Yachumi-Sema admixtures are noted in the northeast of the Sema area.

In general Sema language and culture predominate in villages displaying ethnic mixing. Only in a few mixed villages in the Chekrama border have the Sema adopted customs and speech of other tribes.

Migrations

In common with the Angami and Lhota Nagas, local lore places the origin of the Sema at the Kezakenoma Stone, though other accounts suggest the tribe originated in the vicinity of Japvo (Tukahu). Northward movement of the Sema, spreading fan-wise up the Dayang Valley, has been checked on the west by the Rengma and the Lhota, who were themselves attempting to move east. The Dayang River thus became a natural barrier between the tribes, though the Sema did establish themselves on the west bank of the Dayang, thus separating the Western and Eastern Rengma.

In quite recent times, the Sema have divided the Sangtam tribe by pushing a wedge eastward to meet the Yachumi.

Ao Naga people who occupied the south as far as the Kileki stream were easily expelled by the Sema until the Government annexed the country and saved the Ao from being driven north and west of Mokokchung. The Sema could not take Nankam. They nearly penetrated Longsa, but were prevented by military police at the Wokha outpost. Ungma, also protected, remained free except on the side bordering the Sema. In contrast with Ao villages with stable populations and adequate land, the Sema are said to endure perennial scarcity.

After the Sema were barred from migration to the north and west they continued east at the expense of the Sangtam and Yachumi tribes. Many Tukomi Sangtam in the south were absorbed or driven east in the process.

General Characteristics

The Sema people are said to be generous and hospitable, but fatalistic and frequently improvident. They are characterized as impulsive, generally cheerful, and seldom depressed for long periods. They are also described as plucky and daring, capable of great endurance, and savage on provocation.

Allegiance to the tribe rather than the village is stronger among the Sema than other Naga tribes. It is also reported that due to traditional obedience to chiefs the Sema accept discipline and order more readily than their neighbors. While there have been no extensive studies of the Sema since Hutton's key work in 1921, it is believed that Sema culture has been slow to change and that rule by autocratic hereditary chiefs persists today, at least in more remote areas.

Clothing and Adornment

Except in villages in the south of the Dayang Valley, all Sema cut their hair short in a cleanly shaven line an inch or two above the ear. Girls are shaven until around the age of 12, after which a knot of hair is grown and tied at the back. Wigs of human hair, bound to cane frames, are worn by elders and bald males.

A small apron or loin cloth is worn by the men. Women wear a narrow skirt reaching above the knee. Both wear shawls decorated with cowries.

Weapons

Except for the Eastern Rengma, the Sema were formerly considered the most primitive of the Naga tribes. Iron weapons have been introduced among them only recently, before which cross-bows and daos were their only arms.

Village Organization

a. Location and Layout

Sema villages are usually located either on the summits of hills on shoulders of spurs below ridges. They are approached across open jhums. Houses are

scattered in open spaces to prevent fires and promote better sanitation. Small rows of raised huts near the houses serve as granaries.

Bamboo plantations surround the villages. Graves are located near the houses, and ornaments belonging to the deceased, together with heads of game, cattle and mithuns he has slaughtered, are hung above them.

It is said to be customary for the eldest son of a Sema chief to take a colony from his father's village and found a new village at a convenient distance, the son's authority in the new community being permanent.

b. House Types

Sema houses contain three or four rooms, with one narrow room in each house for unmarried girls. The hearth is in the main room. A liquor room where beer is brewed in hollow log vats is in the rear. Beds are single slabs of hewn wood some two feet off the ground. Walls of the front room and the outside gable are hung with animal heads and the like.

Houses of chiefs and wealthy men are surrounded by massive, carved forked posts to which mithuns are tied for slaughter. A simple platform in front of the house is used for receiving guests. The chief's house serves as a morung, bachelors sleeping in an outer room on the large wooden table (dhan) used for pounding rice. The gables and center posts of such houses are elaborately carved.

Sociopolitical Organization

a. Patterns and Implications of Land Tenure

Land in Sema communities cannot be sold. If it belongs to an individual rather than to the village or a clan, it is transmitted through a complicated system of inheritance.

Villagers are bound to the village chief through ties of land tenure and have been likened to medieval churls. The chief not only provides land for the villagers, but secures wives for those too poor to pay a bride price. He is also expected to feed the indigent and pay fines for misdemeanors committed in or against other villages.

The villagers in turn pays homage to the chief, referring to him as "father" and being referred to by him as "orphan." They are obligated to aid the chief in war and regularly supply a stipulated amount of labor. The villager is also required to remain in the village of his chief, and the property of deserters is confiscated. The system produces a quasi-kinship relationship.

b. Position of the Chief

The village is an organized community under control of the chief. He directs the village and consults with elders nominated by him in matters involving disputes or inter-village relations.

The chief also determines which land will be cultivated each year. He gives warning of gennas, involving taboos upon the village, and is the actual head of religious ceremonies, although priests (awou) perform the rites.

The village is named after the chief and the name is often changed with each new chief, though sometimes the name of a founder is retained.

One of the elders aids the chief in management of public affairs, serving as village herald and running errands to other villages.

c. Clan Organization

There are 22 clans among the Sema, clan affiliation permeating most aspects of social and personal life. Clan membership determines whom an individual may marry, what foods he may eat, and who his friends and enemies are.

Fighting between the Sema clans has been noted in the past. The Yeopthomi and Zumomi clans of the Tizu Valley were once at war, for example. Certain clans dominate particular areas of Sema territory.

Despite the individual's involvement with clanship, this attachment is said to be overshadowed by allegiance to his village.

d. Labor Gangs

Labor gangs, sometimes organized on a clan basis, are the basic work units in Sema villages. Generally they include (1) married women and widows, or (2) unmarried persons of both sexes. After marriage women therefore work alone with women and men alone with men.

Labor gangs elect their own commanders and may eject members for cause. They work in long lines, singing songs paced to each phase of the task, often with magical powers to drive away malignant spirits.

Religion

All Naga tribes believe that men and tigers are intimately associated in their ultimate ancestry. The two are regarded as brothers. In some tribes entire clans have particular associations with tigers.

The Sema tribesman believes that his soul can be projected into a particular animal, with which his body becomes associated. Thus a particular tiger or leopard thought to be the recipient of a human soul may be identified in some particular way.

Possession can come about through eating particular food or sleeping near a man who is possessed. The human soul enters the animal during sleep and returns to the human by day. The individual who is possessed is lethargic and suffers such symptoms as swelling in the knees and elbows or pain the the small of the back. Women who become possessed are said to be more dangerous than men.

Many Sema claim to be possessed and to become were-tigers or were-leopards. Maximum vulnerability to such possession is said to occur between the culmination of one lunar cycle and the rising of the new moon. Chiefs and many important personages among the Sema claim to be were-tigers.

Psychological implications of lycanthropy and associated beliefs are important. Phenomena associated with ability to project the soul cause illness, and numerous reports by government observers describe cases of sudden death without apparent physical cause where such beliefs and practices have been involved. Murromi, a trans-frontier village in unsurveyed territory, is said to be inhabited by were-tigers.

(13) YACHUMI NAGAS

The Yachumi are located at the head of the Tita Valley bordering the Chang Nagas, with the Sema on the west and the Sangtam on two other sides. The Sema people dominate the Yachumi villages closest to them, and are reported to extract tribute from them.

(14) ZEMI NAGAS

Location and Historical Background

By geographical accident many tribesmen of the Zemi Nagas are located in North Cachar, a division made part of the Silchar District due to its proximity. British civil officers in Silchar received no training in handling Naga problems, however. The Zemi, pushed off their original lands by Angami Nagas and Kuki immigrants, appealed to the Government for larger tracts. Not understanding the cycle of jhum cultivation, in which land is often left fallow for a number of years, the Silchar government considered Zemi demands unreasonable, and all lands not under active cultivation were given to the Kuki. Included were the lands of the Impoi and Gareolowa groups. The result was bitter hostility between the Zemi and Kuki tribes.

The solution attempted by the government was introduction of the Angami method of wet rice cultivation, but this failed to support the Zemi. Through the years (notably 1920, 1942, 1963) severe famines have been reported in the North Cachar area, and many Zemi have become day-laborers for the Kachari and Kuki people in order to survive.

A large number of Zemi have been pushed into the western plateau across the Barail Range by the hostile Angami Nagas. Those who remain in proximity to the Angami have long been subject to rule by the Angami village of Khonoma. A few Zemi remained in villages around Haflong and on the plains beyond, but the majority now live beyond the Diyung Valley and in the Barail Range.

The Mikir people, who live in the thick forests of the Mikir Hills to the north of the Zemi, are the most numerous of the tribal groups in the vicinity of Zemi territory.

Current data on the Zemi Nagas are meager. Principal sources are the study by Soppitt (1885) and two popular accounts by Bower (based on 1940 field work).

Principal Villages

As of 1940 the principal Zemi villages were Laisong, Hangrum, Guilong, Maibong, Jenam Prazoa, Hemeolowa, Bopungwemi, Bolosan, Impoi, Asalu and Khangnam. Current population estimates are unavailable.

Zemi villages are generally surrounded by thick belts of carefully preserved woodland. Buildings tend to be large, with carved doors and peaks projecting over verandahs.

Clothing and Adornment

Zemi costumes, noteworthy for fine weaving, include splendid capes and kilt-like garments with intricate patterns. Breastbands are worn by young spear-carrying warriors for festivals as well as warfare. Enormous delicate feather headdresses are found. Long pendants of yarn and beads are worn as overskirts, and heavy beads are worn by both sexes.

Economy and Technology

The staple crop among the Zemi is rice. Millet, maize and vegetables are grown as supplements. 1940 reports indicate that Zemi people of the Haflong area were addicted to opium. Later data are unavailable.

Heavy work is done by the men. Women's work includes spinning, weaving, cooking, pounding rice and brewing rice beer, crop sowing, weeding, reaping, carrying wood and water, and the like. Economic importance of women's work in Zemi division of labor therefore condemns a single man to relative poverty.

Morung System

Formerly each Zemi village had at least two morungs, some three or four. Girls' dormitories were allied with those for men, and Zemi

notions of decency forbade the young from remaining with their parents at night.

Members of each morung in effect comprised a club, and were collectively referred to as a kienga. Children were enrolled in kiengas at birth and actually took up residence with the group and began to receive discipline and instruction in the morungs at seven or eight. Within the kienga small boys worked for the morung and later joined labor groups performing field work, guard duty, or the like. Girls worked at home during the day, using the dormitories only at night. Boys returned home only if seriously ill.

The morungs functioned as corporate bodies, selling wood and rice, clearing paths, organizing outings and festivals, carving new water troughs and the like, as well as working the fields collectively.

Between the time a youth assumed tribal dress and the time he established his own home at marriage, he was excused from all field work save that of his own choosing, the work being carried on by younger boys and older men. During this period he gossipped and drank beer, played music, made baskets, arrayed himself in tribal finery, and spend the night with partners of his choice in the girls' dormitories. Zemi love of dancing, music and pleasure was reflected in the license allowed young men, since it was considered that marriage soon brought family cares and a hard life. During the same period girls were instructed at home in domestic duties during the day, and at night experimented with various suitors before selecting a husband.

After marriage the morung served as a clubhouse and center of social, economic and political activities. Blacksmithing was done at the morung, and drums, torches, spears, trophies and the like were kept there. Visitors were also received at the morung.

Clan Organization and Political Control

Formerly elders controlled village affairs through the morung system, which also provided a structure for operation of public utilities.

The economic position of women in former years was said to give them more authority than men, though they rarely appeared in public affairs. One occasion is reported where women of a Zemi village armed themselves with clubs and broke up a local riot which they viewed as destructive.

Originally the Zemi were divided into two exogamous clans. A leader was selected from each clan, together with a lieutenant (generally the leader's relative by marriage) from the other clan. These leaders or headmen (kadepeo) controlled all lands in sites selected for settlement. In practice such control tended to become hereditary, and outsiders have seldom if ever risen to leadership in Zemi villages.

With the advent of British administration Zemi headmen were given red blankets ("government blankets," still seen among the Nagas) as honorary symbols of office. Under each village kadepo was a council of elders, which served as a judicial body as well as representing community opinion. Only inter-village disputes which resulted in warfare were taken to government magistrates. Judgements by village courts were irrevocable, and disputing parties were compelled to accept their decisions or leave the village. All cases were heard in public and weighed by tribal law. Banishment was a common punishment for serious offenses.

In all, village political machinery consisted of the junior and senior headmen, plus eight officials (four secular, four religious) chosen by the community.

Religion

Two priests, apparently junior and senior in rank, were formerly in charge of public sacrifices and religious life in each Zemi village. Their duties included the keeping of lunar calendars and setting the dates of gennas. An assistant serving as town crier proclaimed the arrangements made by the priests for ceremonies, festivals and the like.

Christian influence has included outlawing of the morung and prohibition of participation in its ceremonies. Drinking of rice beer, a staple in the Naga diet, was also barred. Sources report that tribal organization, discipline and control have been "grievously affected"

by such influence. Most Zemi villages are now split into Christian and pagan groups, sometimes (as in other Naga tribes) the two being separated by a mile or two.

(15) NAGA TRIBES OF MANIPUR

Tribal Populations of Manipur

The area of the State of Manipur is approximately 8,000 square miles, of which 7,000 is hill territory inhabited by Naga and Kuki tribes. The Meithei, who occupy the valley area, are of Naga extraction.

A line drawn along the Kubo Valley road via Aimole and joined to the Cachar road which traverses the western hills from Bisnupur in Manipur to Jiri Ghat on the western boundary of the state, separates the Naga area from that of the Kukis, but includes a few small Kabui villages which lie south of Nongba. Naga villages lie north of this line, Kuki settlements to the south. Kuki communities are also found in the former Naga Hills District in the vicinity of Henema, and as far to the northeast as the vicinity of Melome and Lapvome. The Kuki are in fact scattered in practically every part of Manipur except Mao, and refer to themselves as "birds of the air" who nest in a different place each year.

The principal Naga tribes of Manipur are:

(1) Tangkhul, distributed in the hills directly east and north of the valley;

(2) Mao and Maram (or Maramei), in the hills north of the valley;

(3) Kolya (or Khoirao) an d Mayang Khong, in the hills south of the Mao and Maram Nagas;

(4) Kabui, located in hill areas west and northwest of the valley;

(5) Quoireng;

(6) Chiru;

(7) Maring.

The last three are smaller tribes scattered through the hills immediately surrounding the valley. The Mao and Maram groups are sometimes referred to as quasi-Angami since they are more closely connected with the Angami Nagas than with the Tangkhul and Kabui tribes.

Current information on the Naga tribes of Manipur is negligible, the 1911 work by Hodson remaining a principal source.

Tangkhul Nagas

a. Location

The Iril River marks the western border of the Tangkhul area. The most westerly settlement is Mapao to the north of Imphal. The most northerly villages are Kharasom, Chatlao and Tussum. At one time the Tussum group was tributary to Manipur but was incorporated in Angami territory when the Eastern Angami Political Control Area of the Naga Hills was rectified prior to 1910.

On the east the Tangkhul occupy the Burma border area, extending into the Upper Chindwin District. The Somra group of Tangkhul villages is also outside the State of Manipur.

On the east and northeast the Tangkhul are bounded by Singpho villages. The most southern Tangkhul communities are Sagok-lang and Tangkhul Hundung. There are also minor groups of Tangkhul in the valley at Thobal.

The center of Tangkhul concentration is marked by Sirohifurar peak, which dominates the landscape in practically all villages of the tribe and therefore figures importantly in local lore and religion.

b. Costume

Each clan or tribal group among the Tangkhul is said to have distinctive colors and patterns in dress. Recent information is unavailable, however.

c. Village Location and Typical Features

Tangkhul villages are generally located on hill tops. In building construction, typical features are carved decorations in bright colors, hewn planks and wooden shingles. Beams are sometimes carved with deer heads. Houses are arranged in random fashion. Tangkhul people who came up from the Kubo valley show the most pronounced Burmese influence in architecture.

Planks erected upright are carved with symbolic motifs believed to have magical properties. Cairns and heaps of stones erected in the villages also have religious and magical significance.

d. Social Organization

The smallest unit in Tangkhul society is the individual family, which normally occupies a separate house. Children sleep in dormitories, organized for each sex.

On marriage of a son, parents are dispossessed of the bulk of their property and are required to vacate the most desirable parts of their house, if not to leave it entirely. The eldest male remains head of the family, but the married son becomes head of the household. Ordinarily, however, inheritance takes place only on death of the family head. The obligation of parents to relinquish prerogatives to newly married sons parallels patterns of tenure of village offices.

Tangkhul clans are exogamous kin groups, numbering between two and ten per village. Responsibilities of clan heads include various religious duties.

Village headmen are called khullakpa. Second officers bear the Meithei name luplakpa, implying one who is head of a clan.

e. Economy and Technology

Localized technical specializations characterize some Tangkhul villages or groups of villages or groups of villages. The communities of Ukrul,

Toloi, Naimu, Sandang, Toinem and Phadang, for example, have long been known for weaving. Raw cotton is obtained from the Sena Kaithel or Royal Bazaar at Imphal and woven into such items as the celebrated Tangkhul chaddar, or chief's shawl. Weaving is done by women, who are prohibited by taboos (gennas) from diffusing their art by marriage outside this group of villages.

In similar manner the village of Nungbi and three Hundung clans specialize in production of pottery from local clays. Other villages exploit salt wells or emphasize basketry. Some, such as Ukrul, have thus become powerful and politically important.

Each Tangkhul village occupies well-defined territory, including unused land as well as cultivated and jhum land. Boundaries of local hunting anf fishing rights are also established. Village unity is also reflected in religious activity, in which the community, acting as a whole, participates in various rituals and gennas, particularly food gennas which assist the vultivation of rice or the village's staple crop.

Mao and Maram Nagas

The Mao and Maram Nagas derive their names from the two principal villages in their area. While the two are closely associated, they differ in certain respects.

a. Mao Nagas

The center of Mao concentration is marked by Kopamedza peak. With Sirohifurar, this peak forms part of the watershed which separates the river systems of Burma and Bengal. The Lanier rises below Sirohifurar, flows north, turns east at Sarametti, and joins the Chindwin. The Barak rises in the Kopamedza area and flows south, turning north at Kairong and south again below Maram, receiving the tributaries from the western hills of the valley.

Mao is on the western spurs of Kopamedza on the road from Dimapur to Imphal, contiguous with the villages of Robugnamei and Pudugnamei. Other villages extend as far east as Jessami (Phundrak), which overlooks Melome and Lapvome and is built on an apex of land between the Lanier and the river rising below Mao.

Swemi (Chinjaroy), once devastated by the Kabui, is inhabited both by Mao and Tangkhul

people. Oinam and Purum are Mao villages, but have developed characteristics of their own. West of the Manipur-Kohima road the Mao extend to Uilong, Yang and Bakema. To the west of the Barak are a number of villages which were originally Maram.

Mao villages are similar to those of the Tangkhul Nagas. House facades feature curved and crossed beams.

Organization of village life is also comparable to that of the Tangkhul, though the roles and powers of headmen, clans and clan leaders differ from village to village. Village headmen (khullakpa), who combine the roles of doctor, priest and magaician with their political powers, often have authority extending over several villages. Synchronized gennas may be held in these villages in the belief that the headman, fortified by the collective strength and will of the entire group, is able to constrain forces otherwise beyond his control.

Provided the khullakpa is sound of mind and body, his office as headman is hereditary, and stability of local society depends upon him to a great extent. He is surrounded by taboos, wears distinctive costumes, and performs the sacrifices during crop gennas. The latter vary in nature but usually involve food prohibitions.

b. Maram Nagas

The foregoing characterization of the Mao generally applies to the Maram, though a few variations may be noted.

Maram houses are constructed on poles in Burmese style. They should not face west since spirits of the dead depart in that direction for their final resting place.

Megalithic constructions are found in Mao territory but are particularly common in the Maram area. Noteworthy examples are the symmetrical stone arrangements at Uilong and the avenue and circle of stones at Maram. Monoliths, cairns and small stones of special significance abound.

Kolya (Khoirao) and Mayang Khong Nagas

As of 1910 these tribes were reported as occupying nine villages in the hills south of the Maram and Kairong. Investigators found them difficult to distinguish from the Moa and Maram people. Recent data are unavailable.

Kabui Nagas

Ruins of large villages in the jungles south of Nongba, destroyed by Kuki and Meithei tribes early in the 19th century, indicate that the Kabui people were expelled from the hills in relatively recent times. They are now largely restricted to the hills immediately north of the Cachar road.

A few small Kabui villages in the Manipur valley exist in conditions of semi-servility, while the Kabui in the Kaopum valley raise excellent crops on the flat plains.

Kabui tribal structure is diffuse. The tribe gives no rights to its members, and the individual tribesman owes no allegiance or obligations to the tribe. Nor does the tribe afford protection against enemies, and in former times the individual's worst enemies were often Kabui tribesmen themselves, sometimes fellow villagers.

Similarly, the Kabui acknowledge no supreme tribal authorities in either religious or secular affairs.

Quoireng Nagas

Reports earlier in the century indicate that the Quoireng people were located in nine small villages south of the Barail range, adjoining the Kabui on the northwestern boundary of the State of Manipur.

Chiru Nagas

The Chiru were formerly located in thirteen villages on the slopes of the western hills overlooking the Manipur valley. Chiru village structure was said to be typical of the Nagas in general.

Maring Nagas

The Maring people were earlier reported as occupying several villages in the Hirok hills in the southwestern portion of the Manipur valley. They were ruled by officials, three hereditary and one, the lowest in rank, elected.

(16) MINOR TRIBES

Three other tribes identified as Nagas but otherwise not described in available source material are:

Khienmungan Nagas

Current population of the Khienmungan tribe is estimated at 17,000.

Yimchungr Nagas

Current population of the Yimchungr (Yimtsungrr) tribe is estimated at 17,500.

Zeliang Nagas

The Zeliang Nagas are apparently a mixed group of Zemi, Liangmai and other Naga people. Their current estimated number is 5,250.

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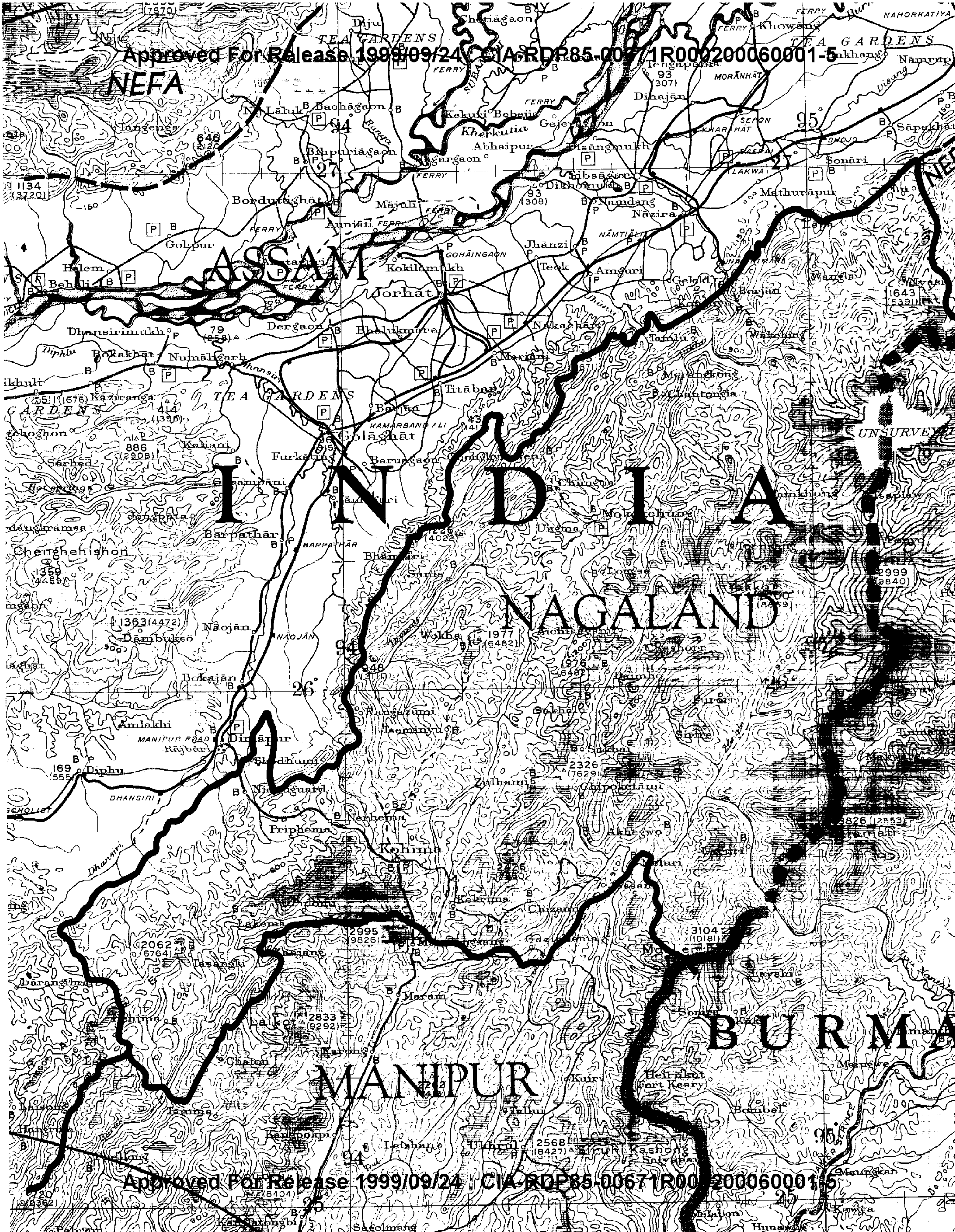

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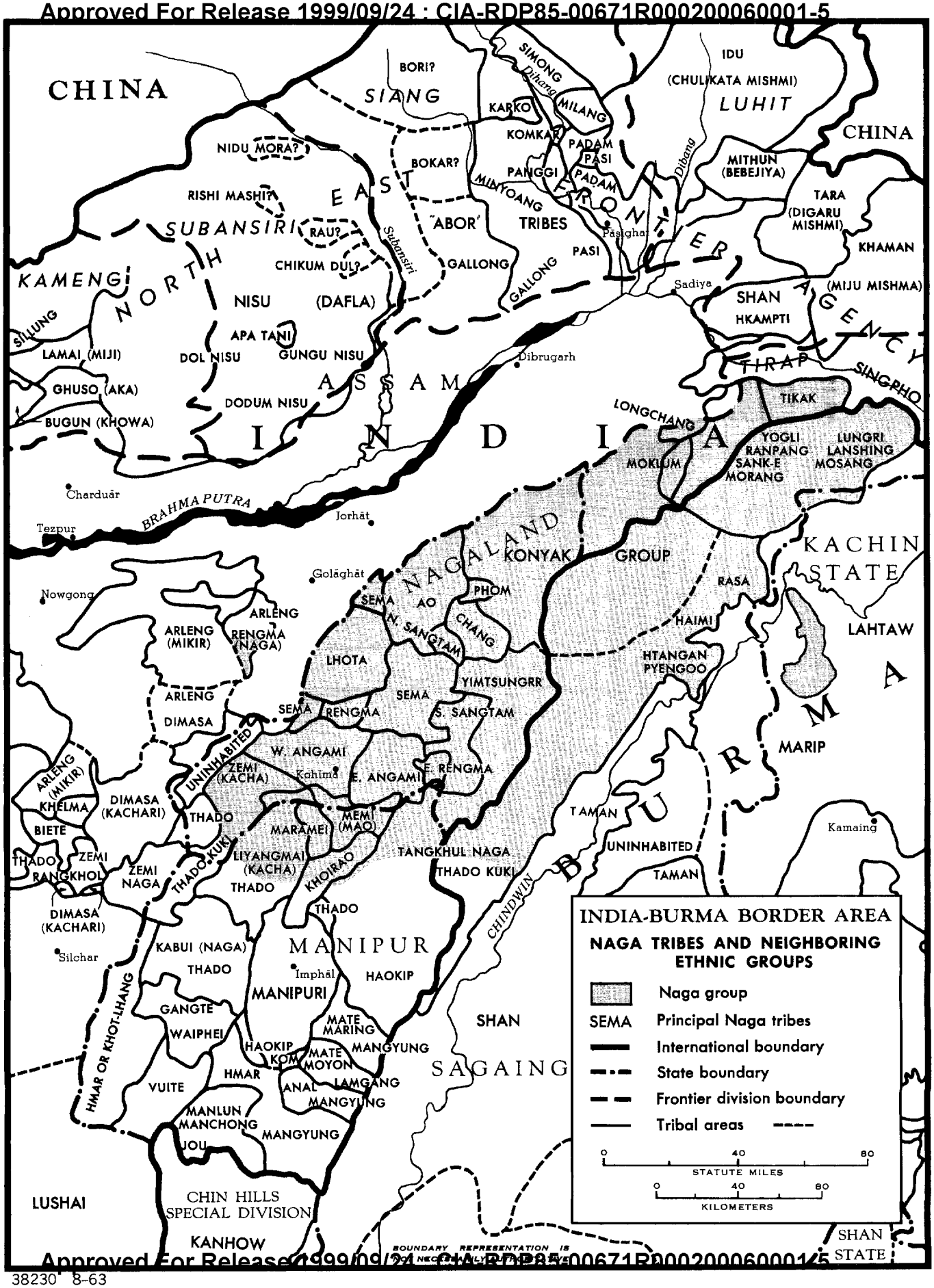

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